is there. When millions of such issues are there, can we give priority to building of atomic weapons? Or shall we give priority to attend to the problems facing the people here in India? I am of the opinion that attending to those problems is the first thing to be done to ensure our security. What is the first requirement for security of any country? Political stability and economic strength. In the matter of economic strength we are far below in the ranking of the countries of the world. We are at the rank of 128 or so. Our people are facing so many problems. Our peasants are committing suicides on a large scale in several areas. What should be the priority in such a situation? Are we giving priority to solving the problems which our people are facing? Or are we giving priority to making armaments? This is a vital question to be decided.

Another thing is that after the tests several people are talking in terms of creating a war psychosis. I do not want to name the persons. Very responsible persons belonging to the Government and persons belonging to the political party which is leading the Govt. are making statements which create an impression that we want to enter into an armament race and that we want to create a war psychosis. I do not want to go into the details. Will it be good for us? Will it help us to solve our problems and to make our country strong, of which we will be proud? Definitely no.

Another thing is that immediately after these tests, within hours and days, several things have happened. The Government of India has already entered into eighteen odd agreements for exploration of oil fields. We have already entered into agreements for fast track projects with three multinational companies. I do not want to go into the details of those agreements. In the name of facing sanctions and while working up the patriotic feelings of the people, they are entering into agreements with multinational companies on very adverse terms to the country. Is this permissible? Of course, American sanctions will have to be fought. In that case all of us will have to stand together. There is not doubt about it. But, at the same time, taking this opportunity to take this liberalisation to that extent even of surrendering the interests of our country will be very detrimental to the interests of the country.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Will you please conclude now? It is getting 1 o' clock.

SHRI J. CHITHARANJAN: Yes, I am going to conclude Sir. I don't want to take more time.

The main thing that we will have to consider is that from here where shall we go? Of course, we have proved our capability to produce atomic weapons. It will be better not to enter into an arms race in this sub-continent. In that case it will be very detrimental to the interests of the country. Therefore, my hope is that the hon. Prime Minister shall take initiative to bring about a national consensus on these issues. With these words I conclude.

MR. CHAIRMAN: It is now l'o clock. We adjourn for lunch. Dr. Raja Ramanna will speak, when we reassemble after lunch.

The House stands adjourned till 2 p.m.

The House then adjourned for Lunch at one minute past one of the clock.

The House reassembled after lunch at four minutes past two of the clock, **Mr. Chairman** in the Chair.

PAPER LAID ON THE TABLE—Contd.

Status Paper on Indian Railways

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI NITISH KUMAR): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I beg to lay on the Table a copy (in English and Hindi) of the "Status Paper on Indian Railways".

[Placed in Library. *See* No. LT-153/98]